

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish-Church of

Christ-Church, LONDON;

On *Thursday* MAY the 5th, 1743.

BEING THE

Time of the YEARLY MEETING of
the CHILDREN Educated in the CHARITY-
SCHOOLS, in and about the Cities of *London*
and *Westminster*.

Secker By the Right Reverend
T H O M A S _A Lord Bishop of OXFORD.

*Published at the Request of the Gentlemen concerned
in the said CHARITY.*

To which is annexed,
An ACCOUNT of the *Society for Promoting
Christian Knowledge.*

L O N D O N :

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SERMON

Preached in the Parish Church of

St. Martin's Church, London

On May the 2nd 1772

At the Anniversary of the Birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ
By the Rev. Mr. John [Name]
Pastor of the said Church

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1772



ROMANS XIV. 16.

Let not then your Good be evil spoken of.



AMONGST many Excellencies, which unite to recommend our holy Religion, there are few that shew its benevolent Spirit in a stronger Light, than its requiring us, not only to abstain from every thing sinful ourselves, but carefully to avoid giving any Occasion of Sin to others. If the most innocent Action we do, will be thought a wrong one by any of our Brethren; we are strictly bound, either to omit it, if we can without considerable Inconvenience; or at least to guard and explain it, as well as the Nature of the Case will permit: that so we may neither tempt him to censure us uncharitably, nor to imitate us against his Con-

Rom. xiv.
1 Cor. viii.

science. The former of these is the Danger, which the Words of the Text most naturally express : and to keep clear of it, is a Matter of great Importance.

ATTENTION to obviate Censures, may often prevent Us from acting, as well as Others from judging, amiss. And where we act ever so rightly, yet if we are suspected of erring, though in Circumstances only, and seem negligent of that suspicion ; it may grieve good Persons, and perhaps weaken their Union with us ; it may intirely separate from us the inconsiderate and wavering ; it may give a handle to the Bad for great Triumph and Misrepresentation ; and both incline them to grow still worse, and enable them to do still more Harm. Whereas prudent Care, first not to deserve Reproach, and then not to lie under it, may procure us Regard from Mankind, by shewing Regard to them ; may secure the well-disposed on our side, and furnish them with the Means of defending us ; may convince even the prejudiced of some of their Mistakes, and moderate their Vehemence in the rest. At least, we shall thus exercise a true Christian Temper, improve ourselves, and be exemplary to others.

BUT though we are concerned to vindicate all our Actions from injurious Charges, yet our virtuous Actions especially. When things merely lawful are condemned, the Damage may be small :

small : but if worthy Deeds are vilified, Religion suffers deeply. And therefore, as we are now assembled to patronize a Design, which we apprehend to be a very valuable one, but which some have opposed and decried, the Erecting of Schools for the Children of the Poor ; I shall endeavour to shew,

- I. THAT this is a *good* Work.
- II. WHAT are the right Methods, to prevent its *being evil spoken of*.
- III. WHAT Course we are to take, if that cannot be prevented intirely.

LITTLE remains to be said indeed upon any of these Points, which hath not been said often already. But if Persons will repeat Objections, the Answers must be repeated too. And the plainest Truths, as they cannot influence at all if they are forgotten ; ought to influence us the more, not the less, for being frequently inculcated.

I. *First* then it must be shewn, that this Method of giving the Children of the Poor a Christian Education, is a *good* Work.

Now if we believe Christianity true, we must believe it is the way to eternal Happiness. And were we to doubt of its Truth, we must notwithstanding

withstanding see it is the way to present Happiness. For it confessedly teaches in the clearest manner, and inforces by the strongest Motives, every thing conducive to private and publick Welfare: and nothing else doth so. Natural Religion, as distinct from Christianity, whatever Zeal may be pretended for it, neither hath been, nor is likely to be, seriously propagated: nor is it capable of carrying in it the Direction, the Encouragement, or the Terror, that Revelation doth. Virtue, without Religion, will perpetually be modelled by Peoples Fancies, and overturned by their Passions and Interests, for want of the Hopes and Fears of Futurity to counterbalance them. And human Laws, the only Restraint besides, extend but to a small part of our Behaviour: and without Principle, they will be faultily contrived, and remissly or partially executed: Men will elude them in some Cases, break thro' them at all Adventures in others; and having once learnt to despise Death, as they well may if nothing follows it, will have little Fear of what the Magistrate can inflict. All Ages and Nations have found these things true: they are visibly so in our own, to an uncommon Degree: and Experience joins with Reason to acknowledge, that Scripture points out the only Remedy: *All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children.*

Isai. liv. 13.

IF then the Belief of Christianity be thus necessary, Instruction in it ought to be early. The absolute Ignorance we are born in, and the Propensity we manifest immediately, to receive Impressions from what we see and hear, are an evident Proof of our Maker's Design, that we should be formed by Education into what we are to be. And had this never been neglected, Error and Wickedness had never prevailed. Now indeed, since they have, Instruction will in most Places, more or less, lead Children into what is wrong. But still it is the surest Method we can take, to preserve them from it. Were their Friends to teach them nothing, would their own Passions, and the Companions they would choose, be better Tutors? Their Reason indeed possibly might: and very possibly might not. At least it would come too late, and be minded too little, to be trusted to alone. Where they are taught from the first ever so well, and governed ever so prudently, it doth not always succeed. But such Care must afford vastly greater Hope, than if they are left to themselves without any, till bad Notions and Customs have taken root, till their Appetites are grown vehement and their Tempers stubborn, till they laugh at Advice and disdain Authority. If then we would prevent all the Misery such Wretches may suffer, all the Mischief they may do, all the Burthens they may
bring

bring on Society ; if we would make them useful to the World, and happy in themselves ; the plain Rule is, *Train them up when Children in the way they should go ; and probably, when they are old, they will not depart from it.*

Prov. xxii. 6.

BUT by whom shall this be done, in the Case of the Poor ? Unquestionably it is the Duty of their Parents. But many of them are Orphans. Many have Parents, who teach or allow them to be taught all manner of Evil : and most of them, such as want Leisure, or Capacity, or Diligence to teach them the Good they ought ; and at the same time are unable or unwilling to pay others for teaching them. Great Numbers of them indeed are removed early into Families of better Rank. But how very little Prospect there is in general, that more Care will be taken of them there, than their nearest Relations took at home, I need not say. Will then the publick Instruction of the Church suffice ? But alas ! what Multitudes of them are there, that seldom or never go thither ? The Laws that require it, are not executed : their Parents have not used them to it : their Masters are indifferent about it, or perhaps make it difficult to them : and what wonder, if in these Circumstances the poor Creatures neglect it ? Besides, there is some Degree of previous Knowledge requisite to their attending publick Worship to good Effect. And the Minister

Minister alone, were they always duly sent to him, cannot ground them sufficiently in the first Elements of that Knowledge: nor in larger Parishes make any considerable Advance towards it.

WHAT further Provision might be made in this important Affair, either by enacting new Laws, or enforcing the old ones, is not a Point to be considered here: but only, what can be attempted by private Zeal and Prudence; the Laws and the Execution of them continuing such as they are, and probably will be.

NOW as to Persons in higher Circumstances: they must and will be left to themselves, to educate their Youth just as they please; and they, and we, must take the Consequences. But the Poor are many of them desirous to have theirs educated rightly. And most of them may be induced to it by those additional Encouragements of cloathing and fitting them for Business; which are singly very excellent Charities, and, joined with religious Instruction, make a very complete one. Surely there can be no doubt then, whether a Method so beneficial every way, to the Children, the Parents, the Publick, should be joyfully embraced. The wisest and best of ancient Legislators and Philosophers, have all prescribed a strict Education of Youth, as the Foundation of every thing good. Both the Jewish

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and

and Christian Institutions absolutely enjoin it. In Protestant Countries abroad, Teachers are universally provided for the Children of the Poor; who are in most Places bound by Law to become their Scholars *. Our Governors at home, both in Church and State, with the whole Body of serious Persons of all Denominations, have shewn their Approbation of this Design. The only Person who hath attempted publicly to prove it hurtful, hath attempted in the same Book to prove *Vice a publick Benefit* †. I know but one Author more, of the least note, who hath declared against these Schools: and He fairly acknowledges, that, “under a proper Regulation, something like them may be commendable ||,” though he was led, by unhappy Prejudices and false Reports, to inveigh with great Bitterness against the Conduct of them.

II. LET us therefore enquire, in the *second* Place, what are the true Methods to prevent this good Work from *being evil spoken of*.

Now these in general must be, Giving no Occasion for just Objections; and, Returning

* See the Dean of *Peterborough's* Sermon at the Meeting of these Children, 1740. p. 23.

† *Fable of the Bees*.

|| CATO's *Letters*, N^o 133.

sufficient Answers to unjust ones. Undoubtedly the former is the main Thing. For wrong Conduct neither can nor ought to be defended; and right Conduct will in a great measure defend itself: yet not so intirely, but that a seasonable Vindication may be necessary for the best Cause. I shall therefore endeavour to set forth jointly, What ought to be done; and where any Accusation worth notice hath been brought, What is done, so far as I have been able to learn, in the Choice, the Management, and the Disposal of these Children.

I. THE Liberty of *choosing* fit Objects for this Charity is a great Advantage, which Hospitals for Foundlings have not; and should be used with great Uprightness and Discretion. If we admit those, whose Parents or other near Friends are able and likely to give them a proper Education; we divert the Bounty, which we undertake to conduct, from such as need it: and there is but too much ground to apprehend, that some who have no need may request our Assistance. If we send in Children to be maintained at a common Charge, whom we should else have brought up at our own: this is burthening the School to ease ourselves; and possibly, receiving more from it, than we contribute to it. And if we allow the Recommendations of powerful Friends, or the Entreaties of Dependants, to en-

gage us in undue Preferences: it is purchasing Favour from the one, or the false Reputation of Good-nature from the other, at the Expence of our Character as faithful Stewards.

THE next Consideration, after the Necessities of the Children, should be their Fitness: both of Mind, to take in the Instruction they are to have; and of Body, to go through the Business they are designed for: otherwise the Pains and Money spent upon them may be quite thrown away.

WHERE these things are equal, or nearly so; the Offspring of industrious and good Persons, ordinarily speaking, should be sure of Admission before others: both as the Prospect of Success with them is much fairer, and as their Parents may justly expect the Comfort of having this Distinction shewn them by the professed Patrons of Religion and Virtue; which will also partake of the Encouragement and Countenance that They receive. Yet if the Fund intrusted with us can be extended further, to the Families of negligent, or even grossly wicked Creatures: as they certainly want Instruction more, so we ought not to despair of their improving by it. If they can be kept, for any considerable time, separate from their wretched Friends; though the Cost will be greater, yet the Advantage is so visible, both

both in Speculation and in Fact *, that very much Good might be hoped for from this Method, were it more practised. But even if they cannot be separated, yet what they learn at School will be some Antidote against what they see at Home : besides that bad Parents will often assist the Endeavours that are used to keep their Children from becoming like them ; and now and then have been shamed and reformed by them, instead of corrupting them. This kind Provision may indeed make some only the more idle and extravagant : and so may that of Parochial Relief, or of Hospitals for the Sick. But for the most part, they who are thus worthless, would be equally so, if all these Benefactions were abolished. The same sort of Persons neglected their Children before Charity Schools were known, who do it now. And it is great Mercy to the poor young Creatures, to enable them to say : *When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up.* Psal. xxvii. 12.

2. IN the Management of these Children, as teaching them Religion is the chief Thing proposed, so it ought to be chiefly attended to : which it may without Hindrance, indeed with Advantage, to the other Parts of their Educa-

* Particularly in the Girls School, belonging to the Parish of St. James, Westminster.

tion. In order to this End, getting by Heart their Catechism, and their Prayers, and select Portions of Scripture, is a Step by no means to be omitted or despised. For Experience hath taught the need of fixing thus in their Memories at first, what their Understandings will afterwards ripen gradually to comprehend. But then if this one Step be mistaken for the Whole; they may be brought up in all the Form of Religion, with scarce any Meaning accompanying it. And though very general and confused Sentiments of Piety and Duty may often be of great use, both in directing and restraining Persons: yet sometimes it is possible they may do Harm; and more distinct ones cannot fail of being, in proportion, more safe and beneficial. Their Teachers therefore should very carefully explain to them, as soon and as clearly as they can, every thing which they oblige them to repeat; and make proper Trials, from time to time, of their apprehending as well as remembering what they are taught: In which Branch of their Work they may be greatly assisted, partly by some of the printed Expositions, which they should always be furnished with; and partly by informing themselves, what Methods are taken in the neighbouring Schools of best Repute. Another very advantageous and very pleasing way of increasing their Acquaintance with Religion, would be,
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turning their Attention, as they read the Bible, to the more useful Parts of its History, by familiar and short Remarks upon them ; such as their Instructors can make, and They can enter into, without Difficulty. Nor would it be at all a hard Matter, by the Help of almost any one of the small Pieces written of late in Defence of Christianity, to give them so much Insight into the Grounds and Evidences of it, as will furnish them with much better Reasons for believing it, than they will ever have for disbelieving. And as this is, at all times, a piece of Justice due to reasonable Creatures ; so it is, at the present time, peculiarly necessary to a most unhappy degree.

THE Knowledge thus instilled must be constantly applied to the producing of suitable Dispositions. And above all, there must be diligently imprinted on their Hearts a deep Reverence of God, as the Almighty and all-seeing Ruler of the World ; who hath given such Laws to Men, as he knows are necessary for their Good ; and will make us everlastingly happy or miserable, as we obey or transgress them. This is a Principle, which will operate from the first, on every Capacity, in every Case : will make Duty appear important, and Sin dreadful : will teach them to feel the Insufficiency of their natural Strength, and to rejoice most heartily in the Grace of the Gospel ; to be sincere and earnest in their Prayers,
regular

regular and watchful in their Lives, and through the whole of their Course mindful of the End *.

CONSTANT Attendance on Publick Worship is one inestimable Benefit, which this Education secures to Children. And to render it as useful to them as possible, they should be diligently taught, and I doubt not but they are, to approach the House of God with the utmost Seriousness, to hearken reverently to his Word read and preached, and perform their Part of the Liturgy in such a manner, as may best engage their own Attention; and yet give others no Disturbance, by the Noise of their Responses, or the Loudness of their Singing: concerning which Particulars, express Directions have been given by the Trustees. The Indiscretion of teaching them difficult and unusual Tunes is, I hope, nearly corrected every where. But a reasonable Degree of Skill in the common ones, will be a needful Support of the Harmony of the Congregation, a means of familiarizing good Thoughts to their Minds, and of making Divine Service more cheerful and pleasing to them: which they should be engaged by every Motive to frequent, as long as they live: else all they have been taught will soon wear out; and the Lord's Day become the

* See the Lord Bishop of *Sodor and Man's* Sermon, preached on the same Occasion with this, in the Year 1724.

most ruinous, instead of the most beneficial, Part of their Time.

IT must be expected, that we should recommend to these Children the Faith and Worship of our own Communion, as all other Christians do : and teach them that Respect to the Church they are Members of, and the Ministers who officiate in it, which the Scripture in very strong Terms requires they should have. But all this both may and ought to be done with such Temper and Prudence, as not in the least to serve the Purposes of Superstition and Uncharitableness, or civil or religious Tyranny ; but of true Piety and Virtue alone : which they will never learn from those, of whom they think either ill or meanly. And whatever Designs of carrying Things further, have been either justly or unjustly suspected, some time ago, in some few Cases ; yet there doth not appear any ground of Suspicion remaining. And as I believe no Set of Clergy, since the World became Christian, were ever so fully and generally convinced, as ours at present, of the Wickedness and Folly of making Attempts upon the Liberties of Mankind ; so every observing Person must see, that this Danger is far from being an imminent, or an increasing one. Tragical Fears, it must be owned, were entertained, or pretended, at first, of the immoderate Power, which the Institution of

Matth. xviii.

17.

1 Thess. v.

12, 13.

Heb. xiii. 17.

these Schools would give us. But Time and Experience have thoroughly shewn, how very little Reason there was, on any such Account, either for us to be fond of the Scheme, or the Laity jealous of it. The Enemies of Religion indeed will of course exclaim against the Greatness of our Influence, even whilst they despise us for the Smallness of it: but all others may surely see Cause to wish we had much more than we have, for good Purposes; and God forbid we should either desire or use any, to promote bad ones.

NEXT after the Duties we owe to our Maker, Christianity requires Obedience to our earthly Governors. And the Government we are now blessed with, is so necessary for the Preservation of every thing valuable to us, that all Persons of all Ranks should be habituated from their earliest Years to pray for it, and honour it, and live contentedly and thankfully under it: but those of low Rank particularly, *to be quiet, and do their own business; not exercising themselves in matters too high for them.* And if this Rule were either transgressed or neglected by the Directors or Teachers of our Charity Schools; it would be an insuperable Objection, so long as it continued, against encouraging such of them as were thus fundamentally mismanaged. But indeed there hath been found, on repeated Enquiry, very good Reason to be satisfied, that the Faults of this kind,

1 Thess. iv.
11.

Psal. cxxxix. 1.

kind, which there might be once, never reached far, and have been long ago reformed. The Imputation therefore now would be grievously unjust : but there cannot be too strict a Caution to avoid all Appearance, not only of Disloyalty, but of every Party Regard of every sort, in the whole Conduct of this Design : for much of its Support, and much of its Benefit, absolutely depends upon that one thing.

TOGETHER with the Habits of Religion and Obedience to lawful Authority, these Children should be taught every other that is useful and good. Their Moral Behaviour, a Point of vastly more Consequence than their Learning, should be diligently watched, both in the School, and as much as possible out of it too ; for which Purpose they are distinguished by a peculiar Dress : and their Parents should be earnestly warned, not to undo what their Instructors are doing. Ill-humour, Idleness, Indecency, Lying, Dishonesty, Profaneness, should be severely punished as often as they are observed : and if any of them corrupts the rest, or appears incorrigible himself, he should be immediately dismissed ; and no false Tendernefs, or mean-spirited Fear of dis-obliging, shewn, either by Teachers or Trustees. For maintaining the Credit of a School, is the sure Way of providing for the Support of it.

BUT particularly Humility should be instilled into them with singular Care. They should understand, that the lowest of those whom their Parents maintain, are for that very Reason their Superiors: and that no Education given as an Alms, can be a ground for thinking highly of themselves. Their Usage in all respects should be answerable to such Lessons. Cleanliness should be required of them, as far as ever their Employments allow it: but no extraordinary Provision should be made for it, nor the least Affectation of Nicety tolerated in either Sex. Their Cloaths should be no better, if so good, as they may hope to wear all the rest of their Lives; no Gaiety of Colour, no trifling Ornaments permitted; nor any Distinction between them and other Children, which they can possibly be tempted to take Pleasure in. If they are fed: their Food should be of the coarsest sort, and not more than enough. If they are lodged: it should be in a manner, that is suitable to every thing else. For, besides that Frugality is a most important Branch of Faithfulness in the Management of Charities, *it is good that they should bear the yoke in their youth*; be inured to the Treatment they must expect to meet with: and wrong-judged Indulgence is the greatest Cruelty, that can be exercised towards them.

Lam. iii. 27.

THESE

THESE things, with others to be mentioned in their due Places, require much Diligence and Prudence ; but, if possible, yet more Piety and Seriousness, in their Masters and Mistresses. If they have the Religion and Morals of their Children at heart ; they will find means, with moderate Abilities, and few and artless Words, to give them a strong Tincture of both. But if they are lukewarm and indifferent about the Matter ; they will take little Pains, and be little minded, and nothing will be learnt, beyond a few Forms. Therefore in the Choice of them, not their Poverty, not the Recommendation of others, not our own Desire of serving them, should determine us : but merely their Fitness in these principal Points ; for the want of which, no Qualifications else, either natural or acquired, can ever compensate. Nor is choosing them discreetly by any means sufficient, without superintending them continually afterwards ; to examine what Progress is made under them, to excite or restrain, to praise or reprove, to support or dismiss them, as their Behaviour shall give Cause.

THE Ministers of their several Parishes, I believe, do not fail, as Occasion offers, to countenance and assist them, in the religious Part of their Work especially. And would they bestow pretty frequently some kind Advice both upon them and their Scholars ; the good Consequences
of

of it might reach farther, than at the first View may appear. For if being taught their Duty makes these Children visibly better; other Persons, it may be hoped, will teach theirs also: but if it doth not, a hasty Conclusion will immediately be drawn by too many, that Religion doth Harm, or at least no Good.

ONE great Help, both to the Understanding and Practising of Religion, is, being able to Read. The Will of God is contained in his written Word: and why have we it in our Mother Tongue, but that all may be acquainted with it? We are often reminded, that Persons ought to judge for themselves: This is qualifying them for it. By the means of pious Books, which that excellent *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, amongst their many other good Works *, have provided for the Poor at very cheap Rates, they who can read, may have at all times plain and familiar Instructions and Warnings, concerning each Part of their Duty, which they can review at every leisure Hour, dwell upon frequently, and fix in their Hearts. Many of them cannot attend on publick Service near so often as they would: Reading will make them great Amends for this. Many grow insensibly negli-

* See the following *Account of the Society*.

gent and thoughtless : Reading will awaken them, *and strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die.* Rev. iii. 2. They may indeed learn Wick- edness from Books : But they may also learn full as much without them, by the Discourse which they hear every Day. And as good Books will be put into the Hands of these Children first, and teach them to abhor bad ones, and enable them to spend their Time agreeably and profitably alone, and bring them of consequence neither to need nor love dangerous Company : there can be no doubt in their case, on which side the Benefit lies. But, besides religious Advantages, being able to read is of very great use in all common Business : and scarce any Body hath Servants who are unable, but on one Occasion or another finds considerable Inconveniencies from it : which is likewise the case of Writing and Accounts. If indeed the poorer Sort were to be carried on so far in the two last Accomplishments, as to give them an Expectation of living by their Pen ; it would neither be Charity nor Prudence, but only distressing their Betters : amongst whom there are Multitudes of Persons thus qualified, ready at all times for Employment. But some low degree of Skill in this Way is already too common, either to make Them grow vain, or others murmur at them : and the more it approaches towards being universal, the smaller will be

be the Danger, and the greater the Benefit. In Country Villages indeed Writing may be less needful: and possibly may turn the Minds of the Children, or of their Parents for them, to some other Business than Husbandry. And therefore in such Places, it may perhaps be as well omitted; and I believe commonly is. But Reading must be serviceable in all Places. For however useless or hurtful to Persons in low Life the higher kind of Improvements may be; which is a Point most absurdly insisted on in writing against Charity Schools, where no such things are taught: yet enabling the meanest People to carry on their Business more commodiously, and know their Duty more thoroughly, (the almost only Uses they will ever put their Learning to, if religiously educated,) must surely have a Tendency to make them better, not worse. Ignorance and Stupidity, which some, though unwilling to own it, have pleaded for strenuously on this Occasion *, who on others accuse the Clergy as the great Promoters of them, are neither Virtues nor Friends to Virtue. On the contrary, most of those are abundantly *wise to do Evil, who to do Good have no knowledge.*

Jer. iv. 22.

* See *An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools*, pag. 304, 353, 370.

BUT still, as Work is what all these Children are destined for, it should be constantly had in view : and they should enter upon it whilst they are at School, if possible. It will make them useful at present, and both able and willing to work afterwards. It will put vain and idle Fancies out of their Heads ; and shew all the World, what is really aimed at. It will silence the principal Objection of Enemies, and remove the only Scruple of many true Friends. Accordingly, for some Years past, it hath been strongly insisted on by almost every Preacher on the Subject ; warmly recommended by the worthy Society above-mentioned, who were the first Authors of this whole Design : and is, I doubt not, as earnestly desired by the Trustees, as it can be by the Publick ; whose Expectations are perfectly reasonable, but a little too impatient.

MANY right and excellent Undertakings are surrounded with vastly more Difficulties in the Execution, than immediately shew themselves. Trustees of Leisure and Activity to attempt such a Change, and of Skill and Interest enough to conduct it with Success, cannot be had in an Instant for every School. Masters and Mistresses, very valuable in other Respects, may be unqualified in this, or too fully employed already to undertake more : adding supernumerary ones would be chargeable ; and substituting better upon the
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Whole, may at present be impracticable. Doubts also may arise, on very just Grounds, what Work to try. Children are not fit for all Sorts: Manufactures proper to employ them are not ready at Hand every where: and setting up such on purpose, as any considerable Number of them could be engaged in, might be an Expence and a Risque very imprudent, on so uncertain a Fund as Charity. Besides, where Manufactures, which might be suitable to them, are established, the Workmen concerned in them can usually supply them very fully with their own Children: and heavy Complaints would be made, and many Contributions withdrawn, if others interfered to take the Bread out of their Mouths. It is said indeed, Hands are wanting: but the Truth is, Employments are wanting, in most Places, for these very young People. Their Parents can make no Profit of them: else they certainly would, instead of sending them to School. The Parish Workhouses can few of them find any Work for the Children brought up in them, that turns to Account. And most unhappily, several of these Difficulties are the greatest in this City: where yet the Number of those, who want to be provided for, is and must be the largest.

HOWEVER, till fuller Employment can be had for them, they are much better employed at School than they would be else. How are other
poor

poor Children, whether maintained by their Parents or the publick Rates, spending their Time? Visibly, the most part of them, neither in doing nor learning any one thing that is good; but as much of the contrary, as ever they will and can: whilst these are kept, all of them in a considerable Degree, and such as are lodged at their Schools, intirely, from bad Company and bad Habits; which their Parents have not Leisure to keep them from, if they had always Inclination: They are accustomed to Application and Confinement, to Orderliness and Obedience; which will greatly prepare them for keeping close to Work hereafter: They are bred up in the Precepts of honest Industry: They have it upon their Minds from the first, that they are to get their Living that way, and no other; and they are at last all put out to it.

SURELY these Considerations must have the Effect, on all thinking Persons, of restraining their Censures, though by no means their Wishes. For it is both to be wished most ardently, and endeavoured most heartily, that every Obstacle to so excellent an Improvement, as that of introducing Work, may as soon as possible be every where overcome. This is not a thing, which You, who are the Managers of these Charities, are driven into, and excusing yourselves from as long as you can. You very well know, how important a

Duty Industry is. You neither have, nor can have, any Inducement to discourage it in this Case; but all the Reasons in the World to the contrary: and such as absurdly clamour against you, would give a much better and very welcome Proof of their Zeal, if they would assist you, and share the Difficulties of the Attempt with you. But, without waiting for what is so little to be expected, there are some Schools where the Children do work: why may not their Methods and Regulations be inquired into and imitated by others? All the new erected Schools in *Ireland* join Labour with Instruction: probably something might be learnt from Them. Persons of Experience in various Kinds of Business in this great City, could surely, some of them, suggest what at least would deserve Trial. For the Girls especially one should think Employment might be found; and for most of them, I believe, is: complete Employment, where they live together; and where they do not, a good deal; in making, for Instance, their own and others coarse Cloaths. For as to fine Work of any sort, it would be raising them above the Rank they are intended for: and might therefore be a worse and more lasting Mischief, than setting them to none. What either Sex can do, perhaps, will seldom turn to much Profit: but merely doing any thing that tends to Usefulness, will be so great an Advantage

tage to them of itself, that some Danger, nay some Certainty of Loss by it at first, may very well be born for the sake of it. Or to prevent this, if any Person would hire, or even accept of their Service, for one part of the Day or Week; the Remainder of it might be very sufficient for their other Instruction. Or whenever their Parents could keep them well employed, provided Assurance was given that they did so, That might be allowed: especially in the Country, where, according to the different Seasons of the Year, there are very busy and very leisure Times: and their Friends will be much the readier to send them at the latter, for being sure of their Assistance at the former. Their Learning, it must be acknowledged, will go on the more slowly for it, and their Teachers will have more Trouble with them: but sooner or later they will be taught as much as they need. And accordingly I see with great Pleasure, that the printed Rules of the Trustees have expressly provided, indeed for every thing right and proper in the Management of their Trust that can well be thought of, but particularly for Leave to be given in this Case. And were there exact Accounts procured from every Part of the Nation, what Rules are observed in the several Schools, with the Reasons of them: I am persuaded it would be a Means of vindicating them in most things, as well as directing

directing them better in some. I shall only add further under this Head, that where Labour is not made part of their Business, it will be advisable to take in and dismiss the Children very young. For so they will have all that they can have: Work as soon as possible, and other Instruction in the mean while.

3. THE Manner of *disposing* of them, when they come to be dismissed, is the next Point to be treated of. And as all Education is for the sake of what shall follow it, the Trustees for them should interest themselves not a little in their future Course of Life; and, so far as they can, secure their Parents Consent when they are admitted, to their being placed out properly.

THE Profane or Vicious, if any such be allowed to take them, will esteem them the less, not the more, for a considerable Part of what they have learnt; will do nothing to preserve the Impressions of it, perhaps a great deal to efface them: and then will throw the whole Blame of their ill Behaviour on the Management they have been under; and charge it with every thing that their own Imaginations can suggest. Good Persons therefore should always be sought out for them to go to. And they should be earnestly intreated, to keep them in the Way they have been put in: especially to see, that they constantly attend on the Lord's Days Service, and make a
proper

proper Use of their religious Books. For some such should always be given them 'at their leaving the School, with a solemn Charge concerning the main Branches of their Conduct.

BUT not only the Persons they are placed with, but the Employments they are fixed in, should be well considered. Great Numbers of them have been sent to Sea: and it is not the Fault of the Trustees, but the Parents, that more are not defending or enriching their Country on board our Ships. Of the rest, those bred in this Town mostly become either Apprentices or Household Servants: and, it seems, Objections are made against each Method of disposing of them.

IT hath been said, that they are put to retailing Shopkeepers, or other easy Employments, unsuitable to their original Condition; and that more Money is required, and given with them, than with other Children: all which, I am assured, is absolutely false in Fact. They are put, as they undoubtedly ought, to laborious working Trades, and no other: with many of them no Money at all is given: with most of them, but forty Shillings: with some few, five Pounds: but more with none. And indeed it is evident, that the Friends of such an Education will dispose of them as cheap as they can; were it for this Reason only, that they may take in as many as they can.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER Suggestion is, that they are put out to worthless Persons, in bad Circumstances, who take the Money, and then break. But neither of This do I find any Proof. However, though a groundless Assertion, it may furnish an useful Warning.

BUT at least, it is objected further, breeding so many of them to Trades occasions a Scarcity of Servants. Now even in this Town, not two thirds of the Boys, nor much above one fourth of the Girls, have been put Apprentices at all: and a great Part of these were probably no other than Household Servants, taken by Indenture for a Term of Years. What the Proportion hath been in the Country doth not appear: but in all likelihood it must have been very small. Or were it otherwise, Disproportions of this Nature will soon rectify themselves. Where Apprentices or Journeymen are not wanted, and other Servants are, these Children will of course be sent where the Demand is greatest: nor can the Trustees have either Inclination or Power to prevent it.

BUT whilst one of the Writers against our Charity Schools accuses them of lessening the Number of Servants *, the other charges them with increasing it †. Possibly the Meaning may

* *Essay*, &c. p. 346.

† CATO, p. 241.

be, that they increase the Number of the upper and idler sort, and lessen that of the lower and more laborious. Now as to this: the Boys, when they come from School, are plainly incapable of the higher Services: nor are many of them taken, even for Footmen. And yet, what Plenty soever there is of Livery Servants, there is so loud a Complaint of the Want of sober and honest ones, that I apprehend it would be no Inconvenience, but a general Advantage, if more of these Children were so disposed of, in serious and regular Families: for in others they would have little Chance of doing Good, and a great one of being ruined. Then for the Girls: as they certainly ought not either to be raised into the easier Places, or qualified for them; since it would hurt both others who have a better Claim to them, and the Publick; so I cannot find that they are: but that low Business, with low Wages of fifty Shillings or three Pounds a Year at most, is what universally falls to their Share, till by a Course of Diligence and Faithfulness they can better their Condition; which surely then should not be envied them.

It hath been alledged indeed, that Persons are unwilling to take them for Servants. But as I know this to be very false in some Places, so I hope, where it is true, it cannot be often on account of their Education. Some may want Ser-

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vants

vants of more Strength than these young People can have at first: some may dislike taking so un-experienced ones: some may think it beneath them, to have such mean Creatures in their Houses: and some may be unjustly prejudiced against them in other Respects, partly by false Representations, and partly also by mistaken Appearances. For there is a superficial Pertness, very apt to spring up, at that time of Life, amongst Numbers bred together: which ought to be, and I hope is, carefully kept under; and yet may now and then give a little Offence. Besides, all who are taught any thing valuable, are doubtless in some Danger of esteeming themselves rather too highly upon it. But this can never be a Reason, why they should be taught nothing valuable. And such trifling Faults are so easily conquered in Children, and will be so amply recompensed by substantial good Qualities, that prudent Persons will certainly think them worth trying at least. They will find them taught to their Hands those good Principles, which else they must think it their own Duty to teach them, with no small Pains. And they will find them restrained, as much as they could be, from the Vices they would wish them not to be guilty of, and which others of their Rank are too commonly indulged in. Still not all, it must be owned, prove well, either under this sort of Management, or any other.

other. Such as do, be they ever so many, little or nothing is said of them: it is only what ought to be expected. Such as do not, occasion abundance of Talk: and all the Errors they run into in spite of their Education, are pretended to flow from it. But so far as Enquiry hath hitherto been made, Multitudes have proved excellently good; few in proportion remarkably bad; scarce any, perhaps none, have been convicted of Capital Crimes, excepting those who had been expelled as incurable. And if more particular Enquiries were carried on in every School, as they are in some, concerning the Behaviour of each Child, that hath been put out either to Service or Apprenticeship: where they behave ill, it might give a good Insight into the Cause, and shew how to remove it: But I am persuaded, from what I have experienced, it would be generally found they behave well. To which perhaps it might add no despicable Encouragement, if some little Reward were given to every one, who at the End of so many Years had deserved a good Character. And I am told, there is a Legacy left to one School, appropriated to this Purpose.

BUT the chief Objection with many Persons is, that this Method of Education takes off great Numbers from Husbandry. And it must be allowed, that most of those, who are bred up by

Charity in or near these two Cities, are fixed in or near them afterwards. But is there the least Likelihood, that any of them would else have gone to Country Business? Do any of the other Children of the Poor go to it from hence? Did any of them before these Schools were erected? None at all. The Governors of one * School have for some Years advertised, that they were desirous of sending their Children to Husbandry on very reasonable Terms: and had they met with Encouragement, which they have not, others would have followed their Example. The Clergy have frequently in their Sermons exhorted to this Method of disposing of them. The more than once mentioned *Society* have advised it continually for a long time. And could any Person suggest the Means of doing it, the Trustees have given publick Assurance, that they would rejoice in it most sincerely. In the mean while, they do all that they have the Power of doing: they place them in such Employments, as they must have followed otherwise, if they followed any. For indeed many of them would only have been brought up to beg or steal: few would have been disposed of so soon; scarce any so well. As to

* That of St. *Andrews*, *Holborn*

the Children in Country Schools, their Number is so small, considering the Extent through which they are dispersed, that no general Inconvenience could as yet be sensibly perceived from it, even though a great Part of them were put out improperly. But I apprehend they are not. They are none of them removed hither: nor apter than others, so far as I can hear, to come of their own Accord. Where Manufactures flourish, they are as usefully employed in them, as in any thing else: where there are none, or decaying ones only, they will go to Husbandry of course.

It is said indeed, that Hands are greatly wanted for Country Work. And at particular Seasons they are: but whether so very much upon the Whole, as some think, may for several Reasons be doubted. The Wages of Country Servants have certainly been much raised: but so have all Wages: perhaps nearly in the same Proportion. And as the Quantity of our Wealth, real or nominal, hath increased considerably within the last half Century; the Prices of the Things we exchange it for, and of Labour amongst other Things, must have increased by Degrees, even had Labourers of each Kind been as numerous as ever: whereas probably they are much diminished. But then the Diminution proceeds, not from these Schools, but from other Causes of a very
diffe-

different Nature *. Vast Multitudes of Men have been employed and lost in our Armies and Fleets. These two great Cities are increased beyond Measure, and exhaust the rest of the Nation. The Number of unnecessary and useless Servants is multiplied excessively: who corrupt one another here, and their poor Neighbours when they go into the Country, and teach them a Fondness for the Pleasures and Ease of the Town. Hither therefore they flock; set up for such Places and such Wages as they like, and behave as they think fit: support themselves by Combinations, when out of Place, as long as they can; and at last will take any Courses, rather than wise ones. But indeed Luxury and Dissoluteness are spread with Irreligion through our People in general, from the Highest to the Lowest: they must all both appear and fare better than their Predecessors in the same Stations: they live, too many of them, in wicked and expensive Lewdness, instead of

* The Author of the *Essay*, &c. seems to be sensible of this, when he says, p. 351. that “if a thousand Faults were to con-
“cur, before the Inconveniences we labour under could be pro-
“duced, yet no Man can doubt, but Charity Schools are acces-
“sary, or at least more likely to increase than redress our Com-
“plaints.” This indeed is saying a great deal too much. But
as others have said much more, there is no Question but he would
also, unless he had felt that he could not, consistently with Truth or
Modesty.

honest

honest Matrimony; enfeeble and destroy themselves early, and produce no Increase. These are the real Causes of the Evil complained of: and do they owe their Rise to Charity Schools? So far from it, that in Truth there is double Occasion for such Schools, in Town and Country both, to preserve, if it may be, some Part of our Poor from this dreadful Plague, that rages so fatally amongst them.

BUT it is objected in the last Place, If this Method of Education hath so excellent a Tendency, how comes it to pass, that instead of that mighty Reformation amongst the common People, which the earlier Sermons on this Occasion promised from it, they are thus confessedly grown worse under the Use of it, than they were before? Now the Answer is very easy. No Provision of any sort for the Benefit of Mankind ever did, or probably ever will, come up to the Expectations and Hopes, which good Persons, laudably zealous for it, were willing to entertain. Yet this doth not prove all such Provisions to be useless or wrong. Besides, it could not well be either foreseen or suspected, forty Years ago, how entirely Magistrates and Heads of Families would neglect the Religion and Morals of all under their Care, and with what enthusiastick Vehemence others would set themselves to extirpate Seriousness and Order out of the World. No wonder,
if

if such Remissness and such Licentiousness have done more Harm, than Charity Schools have done Good. The Number educated in them, is a very small Part of the Poor of the Nation: and the Wickedness of the rest corrupts too many of these. Still the right Principles taught them, often preserve them, and often bring them back, when nothing else would. And if this too frequently proves otherwise, it only shews the Prone-ness of our Nature to Sin, and the Necessity of our best Care. Had none been taken, bad as we are, we had been much worse: and had more been taken, we might have been much better. But to charge the Degeneracy of a People on the very Thing that doth so much to prevent it, and make it the Reason of their being Wicked, that some of them are trained up to be Pious and Virtuous; is a Degree of Absurdity, which one scarce knows how to excuse from wilful Misrepresentation.

III. I NOW proceed, as I am very sensible it is high Time, to consider briefly, in the *third* Place, What Course we are to take, if neither prudent Management, nor rational Defences of the *good* Work we are engaged in, can intirely prevent its *being evil spoken of*: which, though very hard, hath been hitherto, and we must expect will be, the Case.

SOME

SOME will speak ill of it from Hatred, others from Indifference, to Religion and Virtue. For though in Reason both Unbelievers and immoral Persons ought to wish that most others, especially the Poor, might be sober and honest, and for that Purpose religious; and therefore ought to encourage those of them who are so, and such Methods as would make the rest of them so: yet Scripture hath taught us to look for the contrary from them, and in Experience we find it. They would even seem to act from a kind of Principle in this Matter: and Persons, who have no Fear in the least of Society being hurt by Profaneness and Profligateness, affect prodigious Fears of its being hurt by Charity Schools: do nothing, say nothing against other Evils, join in them, plead for them; but this one Danger awakens all their Publick Spirit: and they are as clear, that the Education of these poor Children is the Cause of almost every thing they dislike, as the Heathen *Romans* were, that all the Calamities which befel their Empire, proceeded from the Growth of Christianity. Some again, without going so great Lengths, will not fail however to condemn what they must else contribute to. Others are so unhappily attentive to Party Considerations or Personal Prejudices, that if a Design ever so valuable comes from a wrong Quarter, instead of being ambitious to share in the Merit and the Ho-

Amos v. 10.

John xv. 19.

—xvii. 14.

1 John iii. 12.

nour of it, they set themselves immediately to depreciate it, and suggest mischievous Intentions in it. And every one of these Motives will induce some to invent, and many more to magnify Faults: to dress out Facts with Circumstances, that intirely alter the Nature of them; and talk vehemently about things, which have been corrected long ago, as if they happened lately, and the same ill Management subsisted still. No Persons indeed should be charged with speaking or acting from worse Motives than they do: for it is both injuring and exasperating them. But every Person ought conscientiously to examine, what his own Motives are, and prudently to consider, what those of others may be; and neither be influenced by their Opinions, nor their Assertions, more than they deserve. For not only false, but incredible and ridiculous Stories about these Schools, have been confidently averred, and incautiously believed.

NOR are bad People only, but very good ones sometimes, grievously inclined to Partialities and hard Censures: too negligent of inquiring, too hasty in giving Credit. A small or but imagined Failure, in the Scheme, in the Execution, in the Success, of a most useful Undertaking, shall cool their Friendship, or provoke their Enmity to it: and they strangely forget, that a few Errors and Defects are no Reason for abandoning valuable Designs, but only for amending them; and that the
Good

Good arising from them, even if Amendments cannot be procured, may be vastly greater than the Harm. It is very afflicting, when Persons, who mean well to Religion, will notwithstanding take Part thus with such as mean ill to it; and abet those, who have no other View than to destroy, instead of favouring the Endeavours that are used to reform and improve. The Watchfulness of our worthy Diocesan over the Management of this Charity, hath kept equal Pace with the Malice of its forwardest Adversaries *. And your Care, who are Trustees, hath been applied without Intermiſſion to prevent or remedy, what others have only busied themselves to rail at. Yet the faithful Diligence shewn on the one side, hath been suspected and reproached: and the unrighteous Accusations brought on the other, applauded and propagated.

BUT, unjust as this Treatment is, you must resolve to bear it with all possible Temper and Composedness. For Persons, who judge and behave very wrong in relation to these Schools, may yet be intitled to great Regard on other Accounts. And where Prejudice and a kind of Fashion run against any thing, as they do amongst too many

* See the *Directions* given by the Lord Bishop of *London* to the Masters and Mistresses of Charity Schools, in the Chapter-House of *St. Pauls*, Nov. 14. 1724.

in the present Case ; angry Complaints, however well grounded, will only be despised, or excite a Return of more Anger : whereas mild Representations will at least mollify those, whom they cannot bring over. Objections therefore, and even Invectives, should be patiently heard : and Answers, though sufficiently given already, repeated with Calmness. If real Faults are found, they should be acknowledged : if proper Alterations are pleaded for, they should be complied with. For though Innovations, which appear very plausible, may be found, when examined, very dangerous ; and therefore Love of Change is by no means to be encouraged : yet Aversion to it may be carried to an Extreme also ; and Persons may both intend very well, and in most things do very well, and yet material Points may have been either overlooked by them at first, or gradually forgotten afterwards. Each of you singly therefore should always be solicitous to learn, both from Friends and Enemies, what will be conducive to your Design : and that excellent Rule, which you have so wisely established and so long observed, of stated Meetings to consult together for the better Conduct of it, should be strictly kept up ; and diligently applied, to propose modestly, and promote unanimously, whatever may contribute either to perfect or recommend it. Only you will remember, that the former should be your chief Concern :

Concern : and that the Reality, not the Name, of a Christian and useful Education, is the Thing you are to have at Heart.

SUCH then is your Duty : and if you are conscious of having taken due Pains to perform it, let who will censure or ridicule you, let who will grow cool or leave you, go on with Cheerfulness, and persevere to the End. For, provided it be *a zeal according to knowledge, it is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing ;* and not to suffer *our love to wax cold, because iniquity abounds.* Deserting such a Work, after once engaging in it, not only withdraws Countenance from it, but casts an Imputation upon it. *Be not therefore overcome of Evil, but, in this Sense as well as others, overcome Evil with Good.* You have the Comfort of doing much Service to God and your Fellow-Creatures : you have the Consciousness of having endeavoured to do more. You deserve from all Persons, and you will receive from all considerate Persons, great Honour : and were it less, you would only be the surer, that you act from a right Principle, and shall obtain a large Reward ; not only for all you have designed, but all you have born, as you ought ; whether it be Reproach, or whether it be Disappointment. But then let your whole Lives be suitable to this Part : be good Christians in every Respect yourselves, whilst you profess to make others such : else you discredit your

Rom. x. 2.

Gal. iv. 18.

Matth.

xxiv. 12.

Rom. xii. 21.

1 Pet. iv. 8.

your Undertaking before Men, and lose your Recompence from God. For though *Charity shall cover the multitude of sins*: yet this one Work is only a small Branch of that extensive Virtue; and were it the Whole, no wilful Transgressions, that are not repented of and forsaken, shall ever be hid by it.

BUT all that the Directors of this Charity can do, will be much in vain, unless you, the Masters and Mistresses of the several Schools, perform your Share as you ought, in every particular, which you can either think of yourselves, or learn from others: unless you go through your whole Work with Diligence and Discretion, with Patience and Vigilance, with Impartiality and Disinterestedness, with Deference and Respect to those who employ you, with Authority and yet Mildness towards those you are placed over, with a tender Concern for their temporal and eternal Happiness, and a fearless Resolution to oppose and overcome every Hindrance to either. The best Designs, without a suitable Execution of them, are likely to end in nothing, or worse. Think then with yourselves: Will you occasion all this Charity, and all these Objects of it, to be utterly lost by your Fault? or will you be the Authors of more Good to Them, and more Blessedness to your own Souls, than any Persons of your Degree possibly can in any other Way? By your Endeavours and your Prayers
you

you have the latter in your Power : and God incline your Hearts to it ! The Impressions, that can be made from this Place at present on your poor Children, can be but small, or at best short-lived. To you therefore I leave it, to give them the deepest Sense you are able, of the unspeakable Privilege of their Education, the dreadful Guilt of making a bad Use of it, the indispensable Duty of doing Justice and Credit every Way to the Schools they belong to, and making a Return hereafter, as God shall enable them, for the Benefit they receive.

BUT I must not even yet conclude, till I have in one Word more reminded you all, who are here assembled, that without continual Help this excellent Undertaking cannot be supported ; and that almost every one is capable of giving it Help, more or less, in some Way or other. They who have the Burthen of conducting it as Trustees, all afford it the Assistance of their Purse, as well as their Pains and Advice. And I hope such of you, as are proper, will be ready when Occasion shall require, to share in the same Trust. For nothing is more absolutely necessary to such a Charity, than a constant Succession of wise, and good, and reputable Managers. But if you cannot serve it this Way, serve it however in the much easier Way of a cheerful Liberality. Its being a *good* Thing *evil spoken of*, obliges You, who are convinced it

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is unjustly so spoken of, both to patronize it more earnestly, and contribute to it more bountifully. The truest Objects of Compassion upon Earth, are young Persons left, uninstructed and unrestrained, to the Dangers of a corrupted Nature and a vicious World. And such, without the timely Interposition of a Christian Spirit, would these have been, whose Appearance now, not only gives your Eyes the Pleasure of a beautiful and affecting Spectacle, but your Hearts the Joy of beholding at once, so many Thousands of young Candidates for Usefulness in this World, and endless Felicity in the next, as perhaps no Nation under the Sun besides hath ever seen together. Let us comfort ourselves in the Prospect, and oppose it to the very gloomy ones we have around us. Amongst the Poor our Religion first had its Rise: and there at least it may yet maintain its Ground, till it *shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward*, amongst other Ranks of Men. We are following the original Plan of Providence, in making Provision for revealing *those things to babes*, which *the wise and prudent* in their own Eyes have *hid from themselves*. And may God, *out of the mouths of these babes and sucklings, ordain and perfect praise* to his holy Name, and *strength* to the Kingdom of his everblest Son!

Isai.
xxxvii. 31.

Matth. xi. 25.

Psal. viii. 2.
Matth.
xxi. 16.

F I N I S.



